

## Sole Searching: Footsteps to Freedom

### How a Veteran's Shoes Led Him to a New Life

*"I didn't want to use anymore but my feet kept taking me to the dealer's house and I couldn't understand it. I looked down and my soles were just flapping – in that moment, I was crying and praying, and I knew I needed to do something."*

– Sheldon Wright, Liberty House Client

Shoes. They take you where you want to go and sometimes where you don't want to go.

Sheldon Wright needed them to help him escape – homelessness, substance abuse – and find a place where he could rebuild his life and reunite with his family. He didn't know it when he was looking down through tear-filled eyes, but those 'flapping' shoes would eventually lead him to Liberty House, a program made possible through generous support of people like you.

### A Tough Start

Growing up in the Midwest, Sheldon lived with his mother, stepfather and two siblings until he was a teenager, suffering abuse at home and eventually drifting off and 'hanging out with the wrong crowd,' which led to him being sent to live with his aunt in a rough part of the city.

"It was a culture shock for me," he recalls. "Gang violence, drugs – and I kept waiting for my family to pick me up but they never showed."

It didn't take long for Sheldon to be drawn into the wrong lifestyle, but there was one glimmer of light in his new neighborhood.

### Love and the US Army

Shawana lived on the next block, and one day was just standing on her porch when she stopped Sheldon cold.

"I was just giddy," he remembers with a laugh. "I asked my cousin to introduce me and that's how we started. And she's been there for me the whole time."

**Continued Inside**

As Sheldon and Shawana grew closer, he also felt a pull toward serving his country. Military service ran deep in Sheldon's family and he enlisted in the US Army as a combat engineer at Fort Leonard Wood in central Missouri, about a couple of hours from home.

"Things were good there," says Sheldon. "I learned that I could be responsible, that I had willpower. But my mom got cancer and to be with her, I went reserve and moved back home, back to the same neighborhood."

### **"Wherever I Go, There I Am"**

It didn't take long for Sheldon to return to old ways of substance use and Shawana wanted no part of that life, moving to New Hampshire with their young child and taking a job in healthcare. It took five years, but Sheldon eventually followed, determined to turn things around and recapture the discipline and willpower he displayed when he was in the Army. He and Shawana married and they both hoped the change in scenery would be the answer.

"Wherever I go, there I am. I think geographical cures are overrated unless you really want to change," he says, "and at first I loved how peaceful it was here, but once I got lax and comfortable, things went bad again and I found the drugs, because you can find that anywhere."

They soon separated again, and Sheldon's shoes kept taking him where he didn't want to go. Finally, as he stared through tears at his flapping sneaker soles, praying for help, he experienced a moment of enlightenment.

"I don't know how to explain it," he remembers, "it was like an out-of-body experience, looking at myself, like 'who is this person?' And that moment, I believe, eventually guided me to Liberty House."

### **A Lifeline at Liberty House**

Homeless and addicted to substances, Sheldon entered a local addiction treatment center in Manchester. While there, he was referred to Liberty House, a program of Catholic Charities NH that offers homeless and recovering veterans transitional housing and support to help them get their lives back on track. At Liberty House, Sheldon connected right away with "Coach" Dave Keefe, who would become his case manager.

"Sheldon was lost but we jumped in right away," Dave recalls. "No birth certificate, let's get that; no Social Security card, let's go and get that. Liberty House gets our veterans back on track so they can get a job and start moving forward."

In Liberty House's 4-step program, caring staff members walk alongside the veterans through recovery, helping residents obtain key documents and medical attention, secure employment and ultimately move into permanent housing.

"They basically love you until you love yourself," says Sheldon. "I had forgotten who I was and had no self-esteem. My teeth were horrible too, because of drug use, and I hated smiling. I would come downstairs and hear laughter and go back to my room. But they connected me to dental resources and that helped me feel confident in whatever I'm trying to do. Who doesn't appreciate a good smile?"



In addition to the staff, Sheldon also found that the camaraderie of being around fellow veterans who support each other was helpful in his Liberty House journey.

“I missed it,” he explains. “We’re a brotherhood – you’re accepted and it’s for life. It’s a rarity to be around a group of guys that have the same goal in mind and we all cherish that.”

### Reunification and Next Steps

Throughout his months at Liberty House, as Sheldon was building himself back up, a familiar face began appearing on weekends to cheer him on. Shawana has seen it all when it comes to Sheldon, and she liked what Liberty House was doing for him.

“She loves Liberty House and she’s very supportive now,” says Sheldon, “but I drove her through the mud and I think about that every day. I just try to make up for all I can from this day forward. I love my wife and want her to be happy.”

Today, Sheldon’s shoes take him to a full-time job and to his home, where he has reunited with his wife. He still maintains regular contact with Liberty House and meets periodically with Coach Dave - and he never hesitates in his praise of the program, the staff and the donors who make it all possible.

“To the donors who support Liberty House, sometimes we just need that extra push or some help and thank God for people like you. You’ve changed my life. God works through turbulence, meaning He’ll shake things up to get your attention. I had to trust and have faith and I found somewhere where I could feel at home, do something positive. I’ve never been happier in my life.”

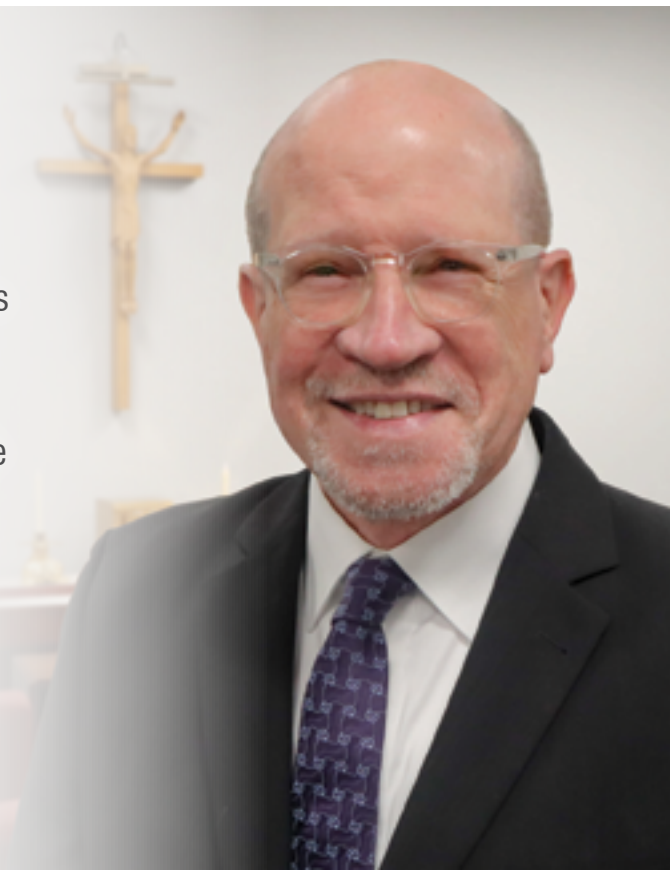
Make a difference for people like Sheldon:  
**[cc-nh.org/news2302](https://cc-nh.org/news2302)**



## A Servant Heart, A Servant Leader

Marc Cousineau’s lifetime calling began with a small job advertisement tucked away in the back of the *National Catholic Reporter*. For the past 39 years, he has dedicated his career to Catholic Charities NH’s Community Services program, driven by his unwavering faith and passion for helping others.

Discover the story behind his journey, his innovative contributions during challenging times, and his special message to donors on the crucial role they play in creating positive change for those in need.



To read Marc’s full story,  
visit **[cc-nh.org/marc23](https://cc-nh.org/marc23)**.





## Upcoming Events

### Mulligans for Moms to Benefit New Generation

Attention golfers – get ready to tee off for an incredible cause September 11 at the Second Annual Mulligans for Moms Golf Tournament! Join us for a fun day at the nationally recognized Breakfast Hill Golf Club in Greenland, which has been ranked as a top-five course by *Golfweek Magazine* for nearly two decades! Proceeds directly support local mothers and children facing homelessness and other difficult pasts, providing shelter and key resources to help them get back on their feet and build safe, self-sufficient futures.

### Liberty House Veterans Day Breakfast

Save the date for the 9th Annual Veterans Day Breakfast on Saturday, November 4 at LaBelle Winery in Derry. Proceeds will benefit local veterans facing homelessness and other daily struggles.

**High-visibility corporate sponsorships are available for both events. For more information, contact Kerry Gerossie at [603-663-0211](tel:603-663-0211) or [kgerossie@nh-cc.org](mailto:kgerossie@nh-cc.org).**

## Touch-A-Truck Raises \$15,000 to Support Local Veterans

What do you get when you combine firetrucks, a race car, bearcats, police cars, antique cars, bucket trucks, and a huge crane donning the sky? Plenty of smiling faces and a fun time raising funds for a great cause, of course!

The inaugural Touch-a-Truck to benefit Liberty House was held on Saturday, May 13 in Manchester, with hundreds of families exploring a wide array of vehicles, and enjoying family-friendly entertainment, food trucks and more. Over \$15,000 in proceeds were raised to support Liberty House, the Catholic Charities NH program that provides substance-free housing and assistance around everyday needs for homeless and struggling veterans. A big thanks to all attendees and all of our sponsors, including our presenting sponsor, SL Chasse Steel!



## Embracing Innovation: Catholic Charities NH Now Accepts Crypto Donations

Catholic Charities NH is now accepting cryptocurrency donations, opening the doors to a wider community of supporters who are passionate about our mission.

By accepting digital currencies like Bitcoin, Ethereum and more, we provide donors with a convenient and secure way to empower us to continue our vital work in addressing poverty, providing essential services and improving lives across New Hampshire.

Visit [cc-nh.org/crypto](https://cc-nh.org/crypto) for more information.



## Host a Third-Party Fundraiser!

Looking to unleash your creativity to make a huge impact on your NH neighbors in need? Consider hosting a third-party fundraiser or event!

While the focus is up to you, options include collecting goods through drives, organizing sports events, hosting community gatherings and partnering with a local restaurant, among others. Depending on your event's size, we can provide online listings, advertising materials and social media promotion.

Getting started is a breeze! Visit [cc-nh.org/thirdparty](https://cc-nh.org/thirdparty) to learn more!

For more information, please contact Kerry Gerossie at [603-663-0211](tel:603-663-0211) or [kgerossie@nh-cc.org](mailto:kgerossie@nh-cc.org).

## Grant Recognition

Thank you to the following for awarding grants to support Catholic Charities NH's programs and services:

- Barrette Family Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
- Bedford Women's Club
- Blanche M. Walsh Charity Trust
- DHS FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program Phase #40
- Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation
- Just One More Foundation
- M&T Charitable Foundation
- New Hampshire Department of Safety
- Oleonda Jameson Trust
- Service Credit Union Impact Foundation/Robert Irvine Foundation
- Town of Exeter
- Town of Hampton
- Town of Rye
- United Way of Greater Nashua
- Walmart #1698

## Your Legacy






Make a lasting impact by naming Catholic Charities NH in your will or estate plans. For more information contact Karen Moynihan at [603-669-3030](tel:603-669-3030).





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## The Power of Your Compassion

Sleeping in a cramped car is not a memory any child should have.

Sadly Caitlyn's situation is all-too-familiar for many mothers like her, trapped in an abusive relationship, struggling to make ends meet and the feeling of hope slipping away. She found herself living in a car with her two young children rather than facing further abuse.

However, everything changed when Caitlyn reached out to Catholic Charities NH for help. Through our New Generation program, we provided her family with emergency shelter, offering them a safe roof over their heads and warm beds to sleep in for the first time in months. We also connected her with our Mental Health Counseling Services to help her heal emotionally and empower her to become the resilient mother her children needed.

Caitlyn is now hopeful for her family's future.

Your compassionate support helps her – and many others like her who are currently experiencing their darkest days – begin their journey of rebuilding.

